"THE DANES ARE FAMOUS FOR COLONIZING"

ANNA HANSEN HARRIGAN

As told to Maxine Kortum Durney, 1988

Anna: My grandfather's brother, Uncle Martin Iverson, was a carpenter, and was probably the first to come from Denmark. My father's parents came in May 1903 from Holsted, Denmark to Petaluma where there were many Danes. Danes are famous for their colonizing. They lived first in the Sunnyslope area, and then in 1907 bought 60 acres on McDowell. It was divided in half, and my parents got 30 acres. My mother was Sina Winding, also from Holsted. My father was Hans Hansen, Jr. They were married here. Uncles and cousins had places near our own, on McDowell. They sometimes shared work, so that a family could have a vacation. I remember going to Yosemite more than once.

My father had an old horse who pulled a sled from door to door of the chicken houses. She would stop at each door, wait for us to load the sled with the buckets of eggs, then move on at my father's command.

I remember working almost all one night with my parents and brother to move birds from one house to the other. The sleeping hens were caught on the roost, placed in the coop, and carried to the roosts of their new home. "Well," said my father, as we placed the last chicken in the coop, "That's the last one. If we'd done her first we would have been finished long ago." ("Danish humor," said Ruby Scott Eatherton of this vignette.)

I remember the baby chicks piling up in the brooder house. We went out at night to check on them. Also had to watch them for cannibalism. The baby chicks had to be watched closely to make sure they didn't "pile" — that is, one would get out from under the brooder stove and soon another, then another would follow. Soon there would be a pile of them one on top of the other in the corner. The bottom ones would be crushed from the weight of the top ones!

When they were about a month or more then they would pick at each other. Probably starting by trying to get what the other had in its mouth, missing the mouth and making a sore. Then the blood made them peck more. If we got to it in time we would smear a black healing ointment on the wound. On the older birds we smeared some gray stuff, under the wings, to try to control the lice.

Broody hens my father called "cluckers." He put them in a cage suspended from the ceiling of the chicken house, and every time he went by he gave the cage a whirl. In two or three days they were through with clucking.

The chickens were caught and examined toward the end of the laying season to determine if they were still laying. If the poultryman could get three fingers between the two bones of the lower abdomen the bird was considered to be still a layer. If only two fingers it meant that she had ceased to lay. This was the Hogan system, devised by Walter Hogan who lived on Skillman Lane, and who described this examination in Call of the Hen,

published in 1913. It was important, in the economy of producing eggs, that the farmer cull the non-producers, who would continue to consume grain if not removed from the flock. That bird was sold to the market for soup and fricassee. She no longer layed up fat at the farmer's expense.

Therman Hansen, Anna's brother: One house that we had at the end of the old brooder house was used as a rooster house. Sexing of chickens came into practice in the later 20's or early 30's. So before that when we bought chicks we got a mixture of cockerels and pullets. As the cockerels became recognizable (the comb) they were moved to what I called the rooster house. Here they were fed and fattened to go to market at 11 or 12 weeks.

Anna: If a chicken was diseased or dying my father picked it up by the head and upper part of its neck and swung it around with a jerk. Death was instantaneous. "Let the body do the work," he said.

We had trouble with rats and weasels, too. Weasels would suck eggs, and big rats would take a sick chicken. Plus, the diseases they carried via lice and fleas.

At night, sometimes the men gathered to shoot rats. They approached the chicken house stealthily, opened the door to admit the dogs, and were ready to fire with BB guns by the light of their flashlights. They went from house to house.

Other nights the men would go in to shoot sparrows, who built nests up in the rafters, and who carried the disease. This was an exciting night, too. When the men had finished with our

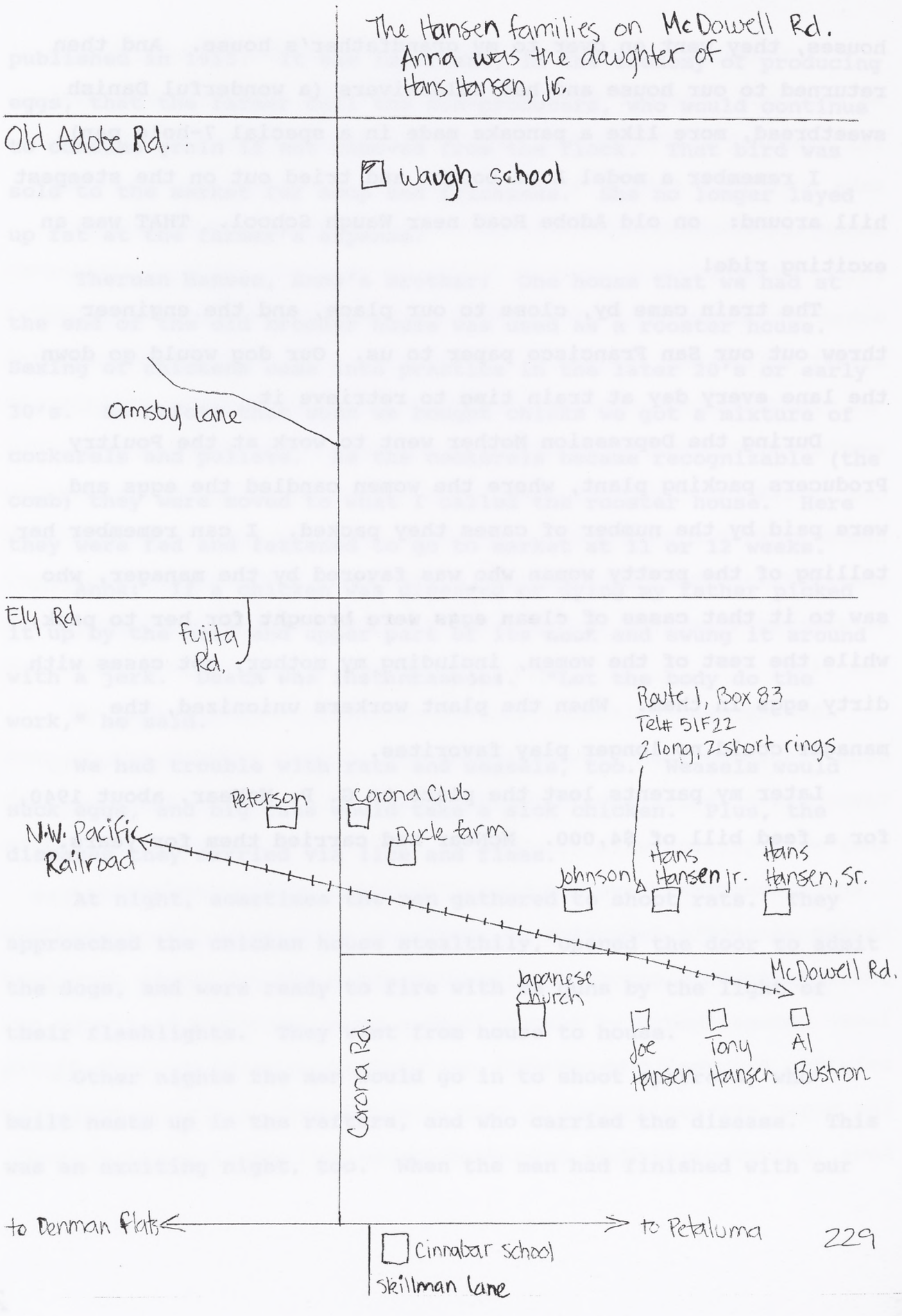
houses, they went on over to my grandfather's house. And then returned to our house and had ableskivers (a wonderful Danish sweetbread, more like a pancake made in a special 7-hole pan).

I remember a model A we bought and tried out on the steepest hill around: on old Adobe Road near Waugh School. THAT was an exciting ride!

The train came by, close to our place, and the engineer threw out our San Francisco paper to us. Our dog would go down the lane every day at train time to retrieve it.

During the Depression Mother went to work at the Poultry Producers packing plant, where the women candled the eggs and were paid by the number of cases they packed. I can remember her telling of the pretty woman who was favored by the manager, who saw to it that cases of clean eggs were brought for her to pack, while the rest of the women, including my mother, got cases with dirty eggs in them. When the plant workers unionized, the manager could no longer play favorites.

Later my parents lost the place to G. P. McNear, about 1940, for a feed bill of $4,000. McNear had carried them for years.


The Hansen families on McDowell Rd.
Anna was the daughter of
Hans Hansen, Jr.
Old Adobe Rd.
Waugh school
Ormsby Lane
Ely Rd.
fujita
Rd.
Route 1, Box 83
Tel# 51F22
2 long, 2 short rings
Peterson
Corona Club
Ducle farm
N.W. Pacific
Railroad
Johnson
Hans
Hansen jr.
Hans
Hansen, Sr.
Japanese
church
McDowell Rd.
Joe
Hansen
Tony
Hansen
Al
Bustron
Corona Rd.
to Denman Flats
to Petaluma
Cinnabar school
Skillman Lane

PETALUMA HISTORICAL MUSEUM
Oral History Program

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PLACE 5817 Sonoma Hwy
Santa Rosa, Calif.

DATE June 22, 1994

Anna L. Harnegan
(Interviewee)

(for the Petaluma Historical Museum)

PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Narrator Personal Information Questionnaire

Name HARRIGAN ANNA CHRISTINA HANSEN
Last First Middle (Maiden)

Address 5817 Sonoma Hwy
SANTA ROSA, California 95409

Marital status: Married___ Single___ Divorced___ Widowed ✓

Birthdate Aug 6, 1920 Birthplace Petaluma

Length of residence in Petaluma (or Sonoma County) 40 years

Education: Elementary school___

Secondary school___ Grad___

College___ Grad___

Other St Frances School of Nursing

Occupation(s) or former occupations(s) Registered Nurse

Travels Jamaica, Denmark, South American, England, Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Alaska, U.S.A. Mexico Hawaii

Organizations, clubs Druids

Other special interests BRIDGE, GARDening, Reading

Additional comments___

THANK YOU!

PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Family History Questionnaire

	Name	Birthdate	Birthplace	Deceased? Date
Parents*	HANS HANSEN JR. mother Anna MARIE Iversen Hansen	11/27/1887	DENMARK	May 7, 1948 Born 8/28/1865 Died 2/9/1929
	Dina Hansen Nissen mother Anna Nielsen	April 6, 1895	Denmark	June 23, 1983
Brothers & Sisters	Herman			
Grand-parents*	Hans Hansen Sr. - Anna Marie Iversen Hansen			
	Peter Winding - Anna Nielsen Winding			
Spouse	Jack Eugene WARD - Gerald Robertsen Harrigan			
Children	Karen Ann WARD			
	Lynne Elaine WARD			
	Robert Eugene WARD			
	Chris Neal WARD -			
Grandchildren	Melanie Ann Ferdinand			
	Elena Ann Killeay			
	Guy Tyrone Killeay			
	Ty Hansen Killeay			
	Laurel Annasine WARD			

*Please include maiden name of mother and grandmothers.

THANK YOU!